

## Theodor Herzl-A Brief Biography & Quotes

[Post Your Comment](#) (5 comments)

[Return to Zionist Quotes](#)

Posted on October 23, 2001

**BASED** On Declassified Israeli Documents & Personal Diaries



1860-1904

Theodor Herzl in effect invented Zionism as a true political movement and an international force. Born to a prosperous, emancipated Budapest family, he was fluent in German and French but LACKED Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian; he was secular, cosmopolitan intellectual, a doctor of law, and a minor play writer. What catalyzed Herzl's conversion to Zionism was the Dreyfus affair in France.

In 1894--95 Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish officer, was WRONGFULLY convicted of treason and confined to Devil's Island. The trial triggered a wave of anti-Semitism in the cradle and bastion of Western European liberal democracy. This wave of French anti-Semitism was the PRIME motive behind Herzl authoring "The Jewish State" or *Der Judenstaat*, which appeared in 1896 under the subtitle of "An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 20)

Just before Herzl died in 1904, he had succeeded in securing a majority in favor of settling Russian Jews in Uganda as offered by the British. Herzl REFUSED to accept that Palestine ALONE must be the ZIONIST GOAL, and a state of "armed peace" was declared. As soon as he died in July, the Uganda scheme was finished, and his death effectively killed it. ([Israel: A History](#), p. 21)

### Related Links

- [The Jewish State by Theodor Herzl](#)
- [More About Theodor Herzl and 'Transfer'](#) by Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons

### Famous Quotes

In 1895, Herzl, the founder of Zionism, wrote in his diary:

"We must expropriate gently the private property on the state assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our country. The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly. Let the owners of the immoveable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth. But we are not going to sell them anything back." ([America And The Founding Of Israel](#), p. 49, [Righteous Victims](#), p. 21-22)

In 1897 Herzl outlined one of the most important goals for Zionism during the first Zionist Congress convention held in Bessel, Switzerland:

"We have an important task before us. We have met here to lay the foundation-stone of the house that will some day shelter the Jewish people. . . We have to aim at securing legal, international guarantees for our work." ([Israel: A History](#), p. 14)

And on September 3rd, 1897 he also wrote:

"Were I to sum up the Basle Congress in a word-- which I shall GUARD AGAINST PRONOUNCING PUBLICLY-- it would be this: At Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it." ([Israel: A History](#), p. 15)

[Benny Morris](#) (the Israeli Historian), described how Herzl foresaw how anti-Semitism could be "HARNESSED" for the realization of Zionism. He stated:

"Herzl regarded Zionism's triumph as inevitable, not only because life in Europe was ever more untenable for Jews, but also because it was in Europe's interests to rid the Jews and relieved of anti-Semitism: The European political establishment would eventually be persuaded to promote Zionism. Herzl recognized that anti-Semitism would be HARNESSED to his own--Zionist-purposes." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 21)

On 7 July 1902, while meeting the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in London, Herzl was asked why Russian Jews could not be settled in uninhabited lands other than Palestine, such as Argentina, he replied:

"[Such resettlement would fail] because when you want a great settlement, you must have a flag and an idea. You CANNOT make those things ONLY WITH MONEY. . . With money you CANNOT make a general movement of a great mass of people. You must give them an ideal. You must put into them the belief in their future, and then you will be able to take out the devotion of the hardest labour imaginable. [For example,] Argentina has a very GOOD SOIL and the conditions for agricultural labour are MUCH BETTER better than in Palestine, but in Palestine they work with enthusiasm and they succeed. I am not speaking of artificially made colonies, but self-helping colonies, which have that great national idea." ([Israel: A History](#), p. 21)

The Jewish state in Palestine, Theodor Herzl wrote, would be Europe's bulwark against Asia:

"We can be the vanguard of culture against barbarianism." ([One Palestine Complete](#), p. 150)

Regarding antisemites, Theodor Herzl explained how it could benefit the Zionist enterprise, he wrote in his diary:

"The antisemites WILL BECOME our most loyal friends, the antisemites nations will become our allies." ([One Palestine Complete](#), p. 47)

#### [Return to Zionist Quotes](#)

[Home](#) | [Mission Statement](#) | [Zionist FAQ](#) | [Maps](#) | [Refugees 101](#) | [Zionism 101](#)  
[Zionist Quotes](#) | [R.O.R. 101](#) | [Pictures](#) | [Towns Listing](#) | [Ethnic Cleansing 101](#) | [Search](#)  
[Chronology](#) | [Site Tour](#) | [Profile](#) | [Guest Book](#) | [What's New?](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Links](#) | [Looting 101](#) | [Contact](#)  
[Oral History](#) | [DONATE](#)

© 1999-2016 PalestineRemembered.com all rights reserved. All pictures & Oral History Podcast are copyright of their respective owners.